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You really have to be paying attention to who your characters are. —*Shonda Rhimes*

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CHAPTER RECAP

Television shows are great in that they allow a multitude of characters to exist and interact with one another over the course of the season. Don't create your ensemble characters in a vacuum. Instead, ask yourself how each one harmonizes with the others. How does each ensemble character relate to, or affect your main character?

It is important to be cognizant of how much your characters are driving the central action of the show, and how much they are simply reacting to what is happening. Where possible, make your characters the deciders of their own fate, for better or worse.

Character development can happen in one episode or over a full season, but it needs to occur naturally. Too many writers get caught up in all the exciting plot elements they want their characters to go through, without considering what the next natural step for the characters would be. What do they want, and what do they need? How can the story serve their journey?

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ [Read more](#) on how Shonda uses alcohol as a visual way to reveal who her characters are.
- ▶ [Learn more](#) about the character of Mellie Grant in *Scandal*, and how the character evolved from just a few sentences in the pilot to a central figure in the show.

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ Review your character sheet from your story bible. Do you have ensemble characters that balance your main character and provide something unique to the overall mix? In what creative ways can you begin to visually show who your characters are?

SUBCHAPTERS

- ▶ Ensemble Characters Need to Harmonize
- ▶ Make Your Characters Active, Not Reactive
- ▶ Evolve Your Characters Naturally
- ▶ Use Visual Benchmarks to Reveal a Character's Journey
- ▶ Killing a Character
- ▶ Remain Focused on Your Character's Journey

NOTES
